ON SOME

PAHLAVĪ INSCRIPTIONS

IN SOUTH INDIA

BY

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THE Christian antiquities of Southern India have been as yet quite neglected; perhaps because the Brahmanical system once seemed to promise more results and therefore to be better worthy of attention, and, perhaps also because of Dr. Buchanan's ill-considered books. His information was by no means new, for much had already been written on the subject by Portuguese and Italians, but he displayed so much credulity on his favorite subject[1] that no one would be likely, after reading his books, to consider their object worthy of serious notice. But as now the great age formerly attributed to a considerable portion of the Sanskrit literature is ascertained to be fabulous, and the originality of much is open to doubt, it is very necessary to collect all facts which throw light on foreign intercourse with India, as the possibility that Indian literatures and religions have been thus modified becomes an important question, and one which may not be neglected especially since Profr. A. Weber's remarkable publications on the Krishṇajanmâshṭamî and on the Râmâyaṇa. I would therefore draw the attention of archæologists in India to the early settlements in S. India of Persian Christians who preceded the Syrians, and to the chief records left by them—basreliefs of the cross with Pahlavî inscriptions, still existing in several places in S. India. Though these tablets had been often noticed, I was the first to point out the true nature of the inscriptions.[2]

I.

The origin of the Christian colonies in S. India is very obscure, and rests upon native legends which, most likely, were first suggested by foreigners in the middle ages; for the narrations of the mediæval travellers afford numberless instances of the way in which the mythology of one country is transplanted to, amplified, and localized in another.[3] The visit of St. Thomas (the Apostle) to India

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1) He asserted that the Syrians of Travancore are Christians of the pure primitive type, proof against the corruptions of the Jesuits; whereas if it had not been for the Catholic Missionaries they would long ago have relapsed into heathenism. He grossly exaggerated the number of Israelites in S. India and relates with great naïveté his attempts to steal some documents from them. His simplicity was boundless.

2) "*Academy*" IV., p. 237 (June 2nd 1873).

3) Every thing strange, that the mediæval travellers from Europe found in India, was connected with the legend of St. Thomas. Elephantiasis was imagined to be a punishment on his murderers and their descendants; several trees and plants with remarkable flowers are still called after him, and are supposed to prove the legend.

has long been a favorite legend, but it rested on the Apocryphal "Acta Thomæ"[1] which seemed totally devoid of an historical foundation till ~~Col. Yule~~ Reinaud pointed out that the king Gundopharus is probably the Gandophares of the Indo-Scythian coins.[2] The legend goes on to state that he was killed in another part of India.

This however is no warrant for supposing that St. Thomas visited S. India, an idea which appears to have arisen in the middle ages, and has been since supported on fanciful grounds by the Jesuit and Carmelite Missionaries.[3] It seems as if the early travellers finding some sect of Christians in India, and relying on the legend, called them Christians of St. Thomas, just as they called the Mandæans Christians of St. John. The Indo-Syrians tell a story[4] that the Apostle Thomas founded seven churches in Mala*n*kare (*i. e.* Malabar or S. W. India), but the names are given differently in different parts, and whereas in Travancore the legend excludes the Mount, intelligent Syrians of the Cochin territory with whom I conversed, expressly included it. This legend cannot be worth any notice historically as it is evidently based on the mention of the seven churches in Asia in the Apocalypse (i., 4), but the names are certainly those of old churches. They are usually given as: Niraṇa*m*, Câyal, Kolla*m*, Pâlûr, Koḍu*n*galûr, Gôkkama*n*gala*m*, and Kôṭṭakâyal. Of these the second (in the Travancore mountains), and the fifth (*i. e.* Cranganore) are no longer existing; the rest are in the Travancore or Cochin territory.

Another Syrian legend mentions a Kanân Tômmâ (*i. e.* Thomas), a foreigner, as having preached in Malabar. This may be the disciple of Manes. After him the same source mentions a Mâr Çâphôr and a Mâr Aphrôttu as coming from Babylon[5]; both of these are evidently Persian names. Of the date of their arrival in India, nothing is however known, and were not their names so unlike forgeries, this legend would be of as little value as the last.

The first historical notice of a Christian Mission to India we have is that of Persians who were Manichæans. It is uncertain, though not improbable that Mânî himself preached in India[6], but one

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1) Attributed to a Bishop of Babylonia named Abdias. These "Acts" state that the Indian king Gundopharus wanted an architect, and that Thomas was sent by Christ. This Syrian legend is copied in other documents. v. Z. d. D. M. G. xxv. p. 321.

It must be recollected that in the early centuries 'India' had a very extensive meaning; the importance of the story of Pantænus is therefore doubtful. So also that the Metropolitan of Persia and *India* attended the Council of Nice.

2) Yule's "Cathay"—"Recollections of travel in the east by John de' Marignolli" pp. 376 & 7 (notes). The Syriac texts of these "Acts" is the oldest; it has been edited and translated by Dr. Wright, but I am unable to refer to it. **

3) Pater Paulinus a St. Bartholemæo—"India Orientalis Christiana," p. 125 and flg. He relies on the *traditio Catholicorum et schismaticorum*" which he supports by distortion of Malayâḷam words and similar obsolete learning.

4) "Essay on the Syrian Church of Malabar" (in Malayâḷam) by Rev. I. Ippan (a Syrian) p. 8. There is another similar tract also lately published by another Syrian (Rev. G. Kuriyan) in which I do not find mention of this legend. Both these essays give an account of the Travancore Syrian Church in a brief compass, but they rely on little except English second-hand compilations. The Roman Catholic History of the Syrians in India (സുറിയാനിചരിത്രം) printed at Kunamâvu in 1872) gives ample quotations from Syriac and other original sources.

5) Ippan, *u. s.* p. 9. Aphrôttu is evidently Aphraates.

6) Al Nadîm (Flügel "Mani" p. 52) says that Mânî "called on" Hind and Sîn and the people of Khorâsân, and "made a deputy of one of his companions in each province". The verb 'da'â' (called on or preached to) does not appear to mean that he actually went to those countries.

The first account is in Barros' Asia. III. pt. 2. pp. 232–238

* This legend is, at least, as old as 1700 A.D. for it comes nearly the same in Canter Visscher's letters from Malabar, originally published in 1743. See p. 105 of the English translation printed (in 1862) at Madras.

** Apocryphal acts of the Apostles II. p. 147. The name of the King is Gudnafar or Gudnafr. Gr. Γουνδάφορος.

of his works was a "Greater epistle to the Indians,"[1] and it also appears probable that one of his disciples came to this country.[2] As, after his execution about 272 A. D. his numerous and influential followers were much persecuted in their native country,[3] it is not unreasonable to suppose that many emigrated to India and Ceylon. Without some such event it is difficult to understand how the Christians became so numerous in S. India during the middle ages as can be proved to have been the case; and there does not appear to have been a similar persecution of any other Christian sect, till the Nestorians got power in the sixth century. As the navigation by the Red Sea to India ceased in the 4th century, on the growth of the Sassanian kingdom,[4] Christian Missions must have come, up to the 16th century, from or through Persia and viâ Mesene, and this is proved by the facts also. The next historical mention that I know of is in the Christian Topography of Cosmas Indicopleustes, a Byzantine monk of the sixth century. He says[5]: "In the Island Taprobane (*i. e.* Ceylon) there. . is a church of Christians, and clerks, and faithful........Likewise at Male where the pepper grows; and in the town called Kalliena there is also a Bishop consecrated in Persia." 'Male where the pepper grows' is Malabar and Travancore beyond doubt, but it is not so easy to identify Kalliena. In the sixth century there were two, if not three, places of this name.[6] One was then the capital of the Cālukya kingdom of the Deccan, the other a seaport on the West Coast of India. At present there are two seaports which answer to the description of the last. One near Bombay, and the other near Udupi, and about 32 miles North of Mangalore. This last has (according to the people of the province) always been reckoned a great place of settlement of Christians; it is now a mere village, but it seems most probable that this is the one intended by Cosmas.

About the middle of the sixth century we find the Indian Pancatantra known by name in Persia, and a learned Persian named Barzûweh or Bûrzweh came to India to get a copy of it. He is said to have been a Christian;[7] but Profr. Benfey doubts it.[8] This circumstance shows a considerable inter-

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1) Flügel's "Mani", pp. 73, 103 and 370.

There can be no doubt as to what country is here intended by "Hind", nor consequently as to a Manichæan Mission to the peninsula of India.

2) Flügel, "Mani" p. 174. The authorities are Abû'lfaraj and Al-Nadîm.

3) About 277 A. D. Manichæism began to spread to a wonderful extent in the Roman Empire. Beausobre (i. pp. 122, 3.) says of the date: "Quant au tems où son Hérésie commença d'être connuë dans l'Empire Romain, il y a trop d' accord entre nos auteurs pour nier que ce ne soit la premiére ou la seconde année de Probus". In the Theodosian Code (A. D. 438) they and the Gnostics are persecuted. They were also proscribed at Rome much about the same time.

4) Reinaud, "Relations politiques et commerciales de l'empire Romain", pp. 265-9.

5) As I reside, for the time, in one of the most out-of-the-way places in India, I am obliged to take P. Paulinus's extract from Montfaucon, as I am unable to consult the original work.

6) Kalliena is mentioned in the Periplus of the Red Sea, (p. 295, ed. C. Müller in Vol. I. of the "Geographi Graeci Minores", 1855) as a decayed port. The editor of this fine edition quotes a passage from Cosmas by which it appears that in the 6th century the articles of export from this place were chiefly steel× and cotton cloth. This fact makes me think that the southern Kalyāṇa must be intended, as steel appears to have been made only in the southern parts of the Deccan, in Mysore and Salem.

7) Wüstenfeld "Geschichte der Arabischen Aertzte" p. 6 say: Er hatte ein frommes Gemüth, und es ist nicht unwahr scheinlich, dass er ein Christ war. Aus eigenem Antrieb oder im Auftrage des König's, reiste er nach Indien, um sich das berühmt gewordene Buch, die Fabeln Bidpai's, zu verschaffen; er war so glücklich, dasselbe mit mehreren anderen abschreiben zu können und übersetzte es bei seiner Rückkehr in die Pehlevi Sprache." This is based on Ibn Abu Oseibia's Lives of Physicians.

8) cfr. Benfey's Pantschatantra, Vol. I. p. 76.

× In the original χαλκός which at that time = σίδηρος: iron or steel. v. Liddell & Scott s.v. χαλκός having got the meaning of 'metal'.

course between the two countries. The next proofs of Persian settlements in S. W. India are the attestations to the Syrian grant B.,[1] which is an endowment to the Tarissa Church[2] at Cranganore by one Marvân Sapir Iço; the church is said in the document, to have been built by one Isôdâtavîrâi.

There can be no question that this deed is of the early part of the 9th century A. D. the date assigned by Dr. Haug; and though it was attested by Indians, Arabs, and Persians, there is not the least trace of Syrians anywhere to be found in it. The Israelite colony is associated in trusteeship of the endowment; a strange rebuke to the fanaticism of modern times, and to the reckless attempts at proselytism which have long since destroyed all good feeling between the different sects in India.[3]

About the year 916 A. D. we find the Arab geographer Abû Zaid (who completed the accounts of a traveller and merchant named Sulaimân who was in S. India about 850 A. D.) writing of Sarandîb (*i. e.* Ceylon): "There is a numerous colony of Jews in Sarandîb, and people of other religions especially Manichæans".[4] As the connection between Ceylon and S. E. and S. W. India has always been very close, this notice is very important, and it is probable, as I shall afterwards show, that the Mount colony was established near Madras about this time.

Thus all the trustworthy facts up to the 10th century that I have been able to find—Mânî's "Epistle to the Indians"—the Indo-Syrian legend of Çâphôr, the testimony of Cosmas in the 6th century, the tablets now described, the Arab traveller Abû Zaid, and the Syrian grant B., all go to show that the earliest Christian settlements in India were Persian, and probably, therefore, Manichæan or Gnostic. It is not till we come to the mediæval travellers that we find Syrians mentioned as living in India.[5] The causes which transformed the old Persian church into adherents of Syrian sects seem

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[1] I place the three very important documents in possession of the Israelites and Syrians of Cochin and Travancore, in the order given to them by Dr. Gundert (Madras Journal, Vol. xiii.) and call them A. B. and C.

[2] The expression in the original Tamil-Malayâlam is Tarisâ- or (as it occurs again in the same document) Tarussâ-palli. Tarisâ or Tarussâ is obviously the modern Persian Tarsâ, and also the same as Terzai by which some sect of Christians was called in Tartary in the middle ages. It appears not to have been explained as yet. That the last part of the word represents some form of the name Jesus or Isa is impossible. The concurrent use (in B) of i and u for the second vowel can leave no doubt that it was short, and it is most unlikely that the long î of îsa should have been shortened and then lost in modern Persian. I am inclined to think that it is a corrupt form of a Semitic word daras (as it actually occurs in Arabic=study) which in the *Stat. Emph.* would be darsâ, and as palli (a Malayâlam word)=room for assembling, darsâpalli will thus be exactly translated by meeting-house (*i. e.* for study or prayer) and would equal the Jewish-German Schul. Tarsâ in modern Persian has the sense of prayer (according to Richardson). Drâšê occurs in a title of a Mandæan book with apparently much the same sense; Euting translates it by 'forschung'.

[3] There is a strong reason for believing that the Persian Colony at Cranganore was Manichæan, in the name of their little principality—Manigrâmam. It is not likely that the natives would ever give a village such a name, for Mani in Sanskrit,=Jewel or Amulet, and we never meet with the word used in this way. It is therefore in all probability a foreign word, and if Persian can only refer to the followers of Mani. This explanation already suggested itself to that profound Dravidian philologist Dr. Gundert in 1843.

[4] Sir. H. M. Elliot's "History of India", i. p. 10.

[5] Profr. Weber writes to me that he has noticed in his Kṛishṇajanmâshṭamî a passage from a Byzantine author which refers to a Syrian Bishop at Romaguri in India. I am unfortunately not able to refer to that work and thus cannot ascertain the date, but it is probably not much earlier than the earliest European travellers.

The most important historical notices of Nestorians and Syrians in India which I can find are: 1) by Friar Odoricus who about the beginning of the 14th century was in S. India, and mentions 15 houses of Nestorians at St. Thomas's shrine; 2) by Nicolo Conti who travelled in India in the 15th century. Speaking of Malepur (St. Tomè) he says: "Here the body of St. Thomas lies honour-

Friar Jordanus (ed. Yule, 1863) p. 23:
"§ 31. In this India is a scattered people, one here, another there, who call themselves Christians, but are not so, nor have they baptism, nor do they know anything else about the faith. Nay, they believe St. Thomas the Great to be Christ." circa 1330 A.D.
Duarte Barbosa (Hakluyt So.) p. 154:
"From this place (Cranganore) further on as far as Cholmonder there dwell many of these Christians." circa 1520.

to be, that, Christianity made but little progress in Persia except in the directions of Gnosticism and Manichæism; but these were much persecuted from the beginning, and according to Al Nadîm (p. 77) barely existed in the beginning of the 10th century A. D. and were then much disliked and persecuted by the Muhammadan rulers of Persia. The more orthodox Syrian Churches had meanwhile made immense progress in Babylonia, being patronized by the Khalifs, and were certainly not wanting in missionary fervour; and thus, both in Babylonia and elsewhere, took the place (with the exception of the so-called Christians of St. John or Mandaeans, in reality Gnostics) of all the earlier Persian sects. No doubt it must have taken some time for the Nestorians to get influence over the Indian churches, and thus it is difficult to put the date of this event earlier than the eleventh or twelfth century A. D. The latest Pahlavî inscriptions in existence are attributed by Dr. Haug to the beginning of that century,[1] and as one of the tablets at Koṭṭayam has, in addition to the usual Pahlavî inscription, one in Syriac also,[2] this may be taken as a confirmation of that date. The practices and belief of the Indo-Persians probably changed (like those of all Indian converts) but little, whatever their spiritual masters may have professed. Considering that, as far as we have any historical records, they have been nearly always the victims of priestly fanaticism and greed, it is perhaps a matter for surprise that anything remains to show their history; we need not wonder at the nakedness of the land. That the Pahlavî tablets have been preserved is the work of ignorance and superstition only, and is not to be attributed altogether to the Indo-Syrians.

II.

The number of Pahlavî inscriptions which are known to have existed in S. India, and the distance from one another of the places where they occur is sufficient to prove the importance of the Persian settlements. At present I know of examples actually existing at Koṭṭayam in Travancore, and also at the Mount near Madras, but it is probable that many more still exist, not only in Travancore but in other parts of India, for (as mentioned already), there are some Pahlavî scribblings in the caves near Bombay which show that they were visited by Persians.

The basrelief crosses with Pahlavî inscriptions early attracted the notice of the Catholic Missionaries who took them to be relics of the mission of St. Thomas. The best general account of them that I know is in the "Viaggio all Indie Orientali" of P. Vincenzo Maria di S. Caterina da Siena, an Italian Carmelite and Papal envoy to Travancore in the 17th century. He says (p. 135 of the Roman edition of 1672):

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ably buried in a very large and beautiful church; it is worshipped by heretics who are called Nestorians and inhabit this city to the number of a thousand. These Nestorians are scattered over all India". ("India in the 15th Century" published by the Hakluyt Society, p. 7.) A Christian was Dewan of Vijayanagara about 1445 (Abd-er-Razzak in do: p. 40).

The Syrians (Nestorian and Jacobite) appear to have had very little influence over the Christians in the West Coast of Southern India before the 16th century; for the early Catholic Missionaries speak generally of "Christians of St. Thomas", and not of "Nestorian heretics". Varthema (1503—8) states that a priest came to Malabar from Babylon once in three years only.

1) These are the scribblings of Persian visitors to the caves near Bombay. Haug, "Essay on Pahlavî" pp. 79—80.

2) See below. The Indo-Syrians do not appear to have the least notion that the inscriptions are Pahlavî, nor have they (as far as I could find) any tradition at all about them.

× The Nestorian(?) inscription of Si-ngan Fou is dated 781 A.D.

Baldaus "Beschrijving der Oost-Indische Kusten Malabar & Choromandel" (1672) pp. 13 "Men heeft binnen Coulang op het strant, 't welk klippigh is, noch een Pilaar staan van steen, dien de In-[?] woonders zeggen van S. Thomas opgericht te wezen"

p. 132. marg. note. "St Thomas Pilaar op Coulang anno 1662. van den Autheur noch gezien."

I could not hear of this when at Quilon in 1873. It was probably a Persian cross, tho' Yule

"La seconda [memoria], sono le molte Croci, formate dal medesimo, che in diuersi luoghi si trouano, tutte vniformi, benche diuerse nella grandezza, ripartite nelle pareti delle Chiese, doue sono venerate dal continuo bacio de' Fedeli. Queste sono tagliate nelle lamine di marmo, per il più bianco, qualità di pietra, che hora più non se troua.[1] La forma è di quattro lati quasi vguali, con certi ornamenti nell' estremità, simili à quelli delle Croci de' Caualieri di S. Mauritio di Sauoia.[2] Quella di Cranganor[3], è riposta in vna Cappella aperta, ed è grandemente riuerita. Più volte è stata vista solleuata in aria per Diuina virtù, cinta di raggi splendidissimi, con ammiratione non solo de' Christiani, mà ancora de' Gentili, de' quali, si mossero alcuni per tal prodigio à confessare la verità della fede, e sino al giorno d' hoggi molti la venerano, visitano, & adornano, offerendoli ricchi donatiui. Quella di Meliapor è la più celebre,[4] e miracolosa, auanti la quale oraua il Santo, quando fù ferito dalli Brahmani; onde restò conspersa in più luoghi del suo sangue pretioso.[5] La lamina, nella quale stà scolpita, non è più alta di quattro piedi, trè larga, di color piardo chiaro, alla quale poi fù aggionto vn' ornamento di basso rilieuo, che la circonda, sù la forma d'vn niccio, e certi altri arabeschi antichi mal fatti, con vn giro di lettere antichissime, le quali essendo incognite, fureno poi riconosciute in diuersi tempi, da certi Brahmani del Canarà, li più sauij, e dotti dell' Indie, che concordamente, doppo hauer dato il giuramento di non alterare la verità[6], dissero qualmentre erano misturate di cinque specie di caratteri, de' quali l'vno non s' vniua con l'altro, mà ciascuno à guisa delle lettere Chinesi, ò delle gieroglifiche degl' Egittij, bastaua per esprimere vn significato. Essendo dunque le lettere trentasei in numero, con trè punti, li quali non sono senza mistero, contengono la seguente interpretatione. Nel tempo, che regnaua il figlio del Rè Sagad, il quale gouernò questi stati trent' anni, il solo, e vero Iddio discese in terra, prese carne nel ventre d'vna Vergine e diede fine alla legge delli Giudei. Dalle loro mani, per sua libera volontà, sostenne la pena douuta alli peccati degl' huomini, doppo hauer vissuto nel mondo trentatrè anni, ne' quali insegnò à dodici suoi serui la verità, che predicaua. Vno di questi venne a Maiale con vn bastone nella mano, e leuò vna gran traue detta Bagad, portata dal mare nel lido: con la medesima fece vna Chiesa, con che tutto il popolo si rallegrò. Vn Rè di trè Corone, Cheralacone, Indalacone, Cuspardiad, & il Prencipe d' Ertinabarad, con Caterina sua figlia, e molt' altre Vergini, e sei sorte di caste, prefero spontaneamente la legge di Tomè, per esser quella della verità, ed esso gli diede il segno della Santa Croce, perche l' adorassero. Ascendendo poi il medesimo il luogo d' Antinodor, vn Brahmane gli diede con vna lancia, ed esso si abbracciò con questa

1) All I have seen are of the ordinary granite or gneiss found everywhere in S. India.

2) See Pl. i. and Pl. iii.

3) Cranganore was destroyed in 1790-1 by Tipu's Officers, and there is not the least trace left of it at present except some heaps of rubbish, the ditch round the Fort, and a small piece of a wall. I recollect seeing a plan of it in Valentijn's great work on the Dutch colonies. The tablet is probably buried in the heaps of rubbish overgrown by jungle which mark the site of the town. There are views of Cranganore from 4 points in Baldaeus. (Pl. between pp. 100–111)

4) *i. e.* at the Mount near Madras.

5) Probably iron stains.

6) This naïve story is no doubt true; the Portuguese Missionaries of those days were the victims of an impudent deception. Except the reputation for learning which does not exist nowadays, the whole story gives a very fair notion of the character of the people of Canara. All European enquirers in India have, however, been more or less victimised in this way. Wilford's case is notorious, and even Colebrooke did not escape ("Essays," i, p. 47 *n*). The last notorious instance is that of M. Jacolliot.

Croce, la quale restò macchiata dal suo sangue. Si suoi discepoli lo leuarono per Maiale, doue fù sepolto nella Chiesa, che haueua fabricata, e perche noi Regi sopranominati, vedemmo tutto questo, habbiamo fatto formare li presenti Caratteri à perpetua memoria".

He then proceeds to relate a miracle[1] worked by this cross: "Questa croce ogn' anno, il decimo ottauo di Decembre, giorno nel quale fù ferito l' Apostolo à morte, cominciandosi l' Euangelio della Messa cantata, si fà oscura, e molto carica di colore, con vn lustro mirabile, particolarmente doue cadettero le gocciole del sangue, terminando l'offertorio si schiarisce, sino à farsi tutta candida e risplendente; verso la consacratione, ritornando al color naturale, si risolue in copiosissimo sudore sanguigno, del quale li Fedeli ne raccogliono li panni pieni."

This passage shows that there were several such crosses in S. W. India, besides the one at the Mount; Persian communities were, therefore, established round the South of India; and at Cranganore, at least, possessed important privileges.[2]

That many of these monuments are irrecoverably lost is more than probable, but some may yet be discovered like the famous Mount tablet. This was found during some excavations made by the Portuguese about 1547. According to Lucena, a safe authority on the Portuguese transactions in India of that time, it was met with "on digging for the foundations of a hermitage amid the ruins which marked the spot of the martyrdom of the Apostle St. Thomas. On one face of this slab was a cross in relief, with a bird like a dove over it, with its wings expanded, 'as the Holy Ghost is usually represented when descending on our Lord at his baptism or our Lady at her annunciation'. This cross was erected over the altar at the Chapel which was built in the new sanctuary."[3] This account is, no doubt, accurate, for the Portuguese on first visiting the Mount found the Christian Church in ruins, and occupied by a native fakîr. The description of the slab is also accurate.[4] It does not appear what cause had destroyed the Christian community there, but it probably was owing to the political disturbances attending the war between the Muhammadans of the north, and the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagara.[5]

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1) The cross is in a Church on the Great Mount which is served by a native priest under the Goa jurisdiction. The occasion described in the text brings a large assemblage of native Christians every year to the spot, and an amount of disorder which the European Catholic clergy of Madras have in vain tried to put down.

2) One of these is recorded by Marignolli (in Yule's Cathay, p. 343)—"nor are the Saracens the proprietors (of the pepper) but the Christians of St. Thomas. And these latter are the masters of the public steelyard." (About 1347 A. D.)

Singularly enough this is the very privilege assigned to the Tarissa-paḷḷi at Cranganore by B. which transfers to that Church the vârakkôl or steelyard held by Marvân Sapîr Iço. (See *Madras Journal*, xiii., p. 131.)

3) I take this from the "Life of St. Francis Xavier" by the Rev. H. S. Coleridge, S. J. II., pp. 49-50. Maffei gives a long account of the excavations made by the Portuguese.

4) v. pl. i.

5) It is by no means clear what is the proper name of the town between the Mount and the sea, now called mostly Mayilâppûr, but which the Portuguese called San Tomè. The European mediæval travellers (Conti and Varthema) who mention it call it Malepur or Meliapore. This indicates the Tamiḻ Malai-ppuram (= mount-town). The Muhammadan geographers (Abd-er-Razzak and Abu'lfida) speak of a Malifatan which is evidently the same place; paṭṭaṇa and pura being interchangeable and having the same meaning—'town'. The Mount is a very conspicuous object on the flat Coromandel Coast, and this accounts for the name. The place was the chief port of Toṇḍainâḍu the ancient kingdom of Conjeveram. The Arabs also mention another Fatan; the Paṭṭaṇam 'par excellence' on the Coromandel Coast was Kâvêrîpaṭṭaṇam, at the mouth of the Kâvêrî, which gives a name to the Tamiḻ poet Paṭṭaṇattu-Piḷḷai and was the great port of the Sôḷa (Chola) kingdom; this must be the place intended.

also Jordanus (p. 41)

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* Valentijn "Beschrijving" V. p. 114 a. "Toen hij (St. Thomas) gedood wierd, lag hij voor een kruis, 't welk te Maliapoer in eene kleine bid-plaats van St. Thomas in een steen gegraveerd was, welke plaats 1547 afgebroken is."
Baldaeus (pp. 132-3) quotes in 1672 Lucena's account; he does not appear to have seen the cross.
** The Portuguese took Maliapor to mean "Peacock-town" see Barros' "Asia" v pt. 2. p. 230.

Once re-discovered, the cross at the Mount continued for a long time to excite considerable attention. I have already given (in the extract from P. Vincenzo) the story of the attempt to get the inscription interpreted, when so remarkable an imposture was practised with success by some Brahmans. By the end of the 16th century this story was universally accepted in Europe, and is even given by Cardinal Baronius in his Ecclesiastical Annals. In the 17th century the zealous antiquarian P. Kircher engraved a figure of the cross.[1] Since then it has been visited and described by perhaps a score of travellers, and it certainly deserved this notice far more than many similar objects in Southern India.

All the Persian crosses that I know of closely resemble one another, yet it is impossible to assign them all to the same period. The oldest of the two at Koṭṭayam[2] and that at Madras appear to be of much the same time, if one may judge from the formation of the letters. The symbolical ornaments of the cross are nearly the same, and the Pahlavî inscription is the same in both cases. I was not able to examine the tablets at Koṭṭayam as closely as I could have wished, for the native priest there was anxious to hurry me away as soon as possible, and the older tablet is so covered with whitewash, as to render the letters in many parts indistinct; but of the identity of the inscription on this tablet and that at the Mount, I have no doubt.

The inscription on the older tablet at Koṭṭayam and on the one at the Mount is longer than that on the altar tablet at the former place, the first part being omitted in the last. The inscription on the two former is divided into two parts by a small cross on the right of the arch. The first part is then to be read downwards, and the second over the arch to the left.

The difficulties of Pahlavî decipherment are so great, that I might well content myself with collecting the existing notices of the Persian settlements in S. India, and with describing the relics of them that yet remain. As short vowels are omitted, and several of the letters stand for a number of different sounds, the Pahlavî character is exceedingly ambiguous; and the language, which was the court and official language of the Sassanian kingdom, being (as Dr. Haug has shown) a Semitic dialect more or less infused with old Persian, it presents considerable difficulty also. Nor is this all; the remains of the Magian literature in Pahlavî which the Parsîs have preserved, are as yet far from being completely explained, though it is some years since Dr. Haug founded the modern school of Pahlavî scholarship, and since the learned Desturs of the Bombay Presidency have begun to issue their excellent editions and publications on this subject.

The following is therefore no more than a first attempt at explaining an inscription[3] which being very short affords little to control the reading which is doubtful in some of the words.

As I have already said, it is divided into two parts by a +; the first part is the shorter sentence to be read downwards from this mark. It begins with a curved line which is not unlike the *i* of

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1) I am indebted to Col. Yule for this information.

2) v. Pl. iii. This is in the S. wall of what may be called the nave of the older Syrian Church at Koṭṭayam, dedicated (I was told) to St. Gabriel. The other tablet is behind one of the minor altars in the same church.

3) The lithograph (pl. i.) is from a photograph taken for me by Messrs. Nicholas of Madras, and also from a sketch; whatever its execution may technically be, it is therefore accurate. The cross is behind a screen, and as the opening is small, the original photograph had to be taken in two parts.

some MSS. and coins; but as, if it be read thus, the first word gives no sense, it must be merely a mark to indicate the beginning of the sentence. The inscription then runs:—

(First part read downwards):

2/ Yîn[1] rjyâ[2] mn vn[3] drd-i[4] dnmn[5]: 　 zazîyā ... van lant [? dant]

(Second part read over the arch):

1/ Mûn[6] amn[7] mšîhâ[8] af[9] alhâ-i[10] mdm[11] af[12] rîd-i[13] aj-asr[14] bôkht[15]. 　 (Haug (letter) 22 June 74) zūākī — nīkkī . bukht

Literally: "In punishment (?) by the cross (was) the suffering of this (one): (he) who is the true Christ, and God above, and guide ever pure."

Many of the words occur in every Pahlavî sentence and need no remark, as their meanings are beyond doubt.

2. rjyâ. This is clearly a Semitic word, as the termination -yâ shows (cfr. lelyâ, kamryâ etc.); but as it is, I cannot suggest any word which will give a plausible meaning. As, however, d and j are frequently confused in Pahlavî, it may be for radyâ which would mean 'punishment'; or it may be explained by the Arabic 'rizâ' resignation.

3. van occurs in Pazand with the sense of 'tree'. Without straining the sense, this may be taken (as in several languages is actually done) for the 'cross'.

4. dard. This occurs in Pazand and in modern Persian. West ('Mainyo-i-khard' glossary, s. v.) explains it by—'a pain, an ache, a pang, suffering, anguish.'

7. amn. This word is written in a somewhat peculiar manner; but the curved stroke is clearly n, so the last letter cannot be t, nor can the word be 'ît.' The root aman occurs in Hebrew and Arabic in the sense of 'to be sure, to trust.'

8. mšîhâ. Like most Semitic words in Pahlavî, this is in the *status emphaticus* form.

9. af. This is the Huzvaresh conjunction, read va.

10. alhâ-i. The *status emphaticus* of the Semitic word for God in all the dialects; with the idhâfat (-i) as being qualified by the word which follows.

11. madam. This is a common word which generally occurs as a preposition, but in the Pand-namah (1.) it is used just as here.

12. rîd-i. This word is ambiguous as it may be read rîd-i or rkhî. The former would mean, truth or, perhaps, guide. The -i is the idhâfat. If read rkhî it must be for rûakh 'spirit.'

14. aj-asar. lit. 'from everlasting' or 'through everlasting.'

In the Mount inscription '*aj*' is written with separate letters, in the Koṭṭayam inscription it is written with a ligature.

15. bôkht. This is a term of the Zoroastrian system for 'pure'; it is the past p. of bôkhtan.

For want of Pahlavî, Hebrew and Arabic types, I am obliged to leave out much that might be put by way of justification of my proposed translation.

One would naturally look for some such formula as this in the place where the inscription is, and as it surrounds a representation of the cross it is in every way appropriate. Apparently there is nothing in it to give the least clue as to the Christian sect which originally had it set up,[1] but

[1] The order of the attributes in the last part of the sentence seems, however, unusual. If the inscription were Manichæan, it would probably be in a peculiar character.

Haug takes [...] to be for amn(ūnad); is this possible considering that some of the crosses want the shorter sentence?

the representation of the cross seems peculiar, and may, perhaps, be found to embody some gnostic ideas.

The characters and language are nearly those of the books, but are not, by any means, of the earliest period. If one may judge by the legends on coins the dates of which are known,[1] the earliest of these inscriptions may belong to the seventh or eighth century. The earliest appear to be the ones at the Mount, and in the S. wall of the Koṭṭayam old church;[2] the latest[3] that behind a side altar in the same church, and on which is also a sentence in Syriac in the ordinary Estrangelo character,[4] to judge by facsimiles of MSS., of a period not older than the 10th century. At all events (whatever miracles they may have worked), these crosses are long subsequent to the time of the Apostle Thomas.

The text of the grant B. throws a little light on Pahlavî pronunciation. The following names occur in it: 'Marvân Sapir Iço' and 'Içodâtavîrai'. Now the pronunciation of the S. Indian alphabets has certainly not changed since the probable date (8th century) of this inscription,[5] so it is evident that the modern Pahlavî pronunciation has varied in some letters. Sapir is now pronounced *ś*apîr; but it is, however, evident by the above that the Pahlavî *ś* or sh was the same as the Sanskrit s, and the Pahlavî s the same as the Sanskrit ç, about the 8th century; as these words are written with Grantha letters, there can be no doubt as to the pronunciation.

The original grant of the privileges of a factory to the Persians is to Iravi Korttan; what the Persian original of this name is, I cannot guess.

In order to bring together here all that I can find relating to the Persians in Southern India, I give (Pl. ii. and iii.) the Sassanian and Chaldæo-Pahlavî attestations to the grant B. already referred to, and which is now in the possession of one of the rival Syrian Metropolitans at Koṭṭayam. These few lines have been already discussed by Dr. E. W. West, and subsequently by Dr. Haug whose remarks are as follows:—

"Of more interest is a Pahlavî inscription found on a copper plate in the South of India. It forms part of a grant which records the rights and privileges of the early Christians on the Malabar Coast. The grant is engraved on six copper plates, five of which contain, in old Tamil characters[6], the grant made by an ancient king, to the Christian congregation of his country[7]; the sixth contains the names of the witnesses, in three different characters and languages, none of them Indian[8], viz. eleven

1) I refer to Dr. Mordtmann's Articles in the German As. Society's Journal, and to those by Mr. E. Thomas in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.

2) Pl. iii. *fig.* 2.

3) This is written in a sort of running hand (cfr. the word mîthâ in Pl. iii. *fig.* 2.)

4) It is the first half of Gal. vi. 14 ("Let me not glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"); an obvious addition by people who wanted to make all orthodox according to Nestorian views.

5) As I shall prove elsewhere (in a Manual of S. Indian Palaeography).

6) *i. e.* Vaṭṭeḻuttu. (A. B.)

7) Rather, by A. (*d.* 774) privileges are granted to one Iravi Korttan by the local prince (Vîra Râghava); by B. some of these privileges are made an endowment of the church, about half a century after the date of A. These settlements of foreigners probably enabled the local rulers in Malabar to throw off allegiance to the Cêra kingdom which fell in the 9th century. (A. B.)

8) Anquetil's version (from a Sanskrit copy) shows that one plate is now missing, and that it contained the names of Indian witnesses. *Madras Journal*, xiv. p. 199. I saw these plates last April, and found that one (2) had been recently damaged. (A. B.)

names in the Kufic character and Arabic language, ten in the Sassanian Pahlavî character and language, and four in the Hebrew (Chaldæo-Pahlavî?) character and the Persian language......Its date cannot be ascertained until the inscription shall have been deciphered, but we shall not be far wrong if we assume it to belong to the 9th century.[1]

Each attestation in the Sassanian Pahlavî is introduced by the words **mînûkû lî**, then follows the name in full, succeeded each time by the phrase **patash gôkâs hûmanam**, 'I am witness to it'; which language is identical with that of the books. As regards **mînûkû**, it can only be taken as a title which is attributed to every witness, and which contains the **mînû**, 'spirit', of the early Sassanian inscriptions. **Lî** which follows, is 'I'; and the whole means 'the spirit of me, my spirit', *i. e.* I myself; **mînû** always signifying the invisible counterpart of anything visible on this earth[2]..... The names are difficult to read, and do not look like common Parsi names, nor are they Christian; in line 13 (? 14) **anhomâ** 'Ormazd' is clearly legible, which indicates a true Parsi name. E. W. West has made an attempt at reading almost all the names, but as they are neither legibly written, nor familiar to us, I do not think it safe to venture on an explanation of them. The shape of the letters is nearly the same as in the books, and the compound characters are employed throughout.

Regarding the signatures in the Hebrew character, which have been all read by E. W. West, in his paper on the Sassanian inscriptions, the names **Hasan 'Ali**, **Mîkîâîl** (Michael) and **Abraham** are pretty clear. Each signature is introduced by the phrase **hak-gûn-kun**, which is translated by E. W. West as 'the truth-speaking-doer'. To this interpretation, which appears somewhat artificial, I cannot give my full assent; I quite agree with taking **kun** as identical with the Persian **kun** 'making, doing', *in fine compositorum;* but **gûn** cannot be taken in the sense of 'speaking', as this would be **gû** alone, but not **gûn**; besides I doubt if the Arabic word **haqq** 'truth' were used at so early a time in Persian. I am however, unable to offer any satisfactory explanation; I take **hak** as identical with the Chaldæ **hakh** 'this', and **gûn** as the Persian **gûn** 'manner, mode, way'; and the whole would thus mean: 'doing in this manner'; *i. e.* hereby (by the signature which follows). Each signature is followed by the words **badîsh guvaham**, 'I am witness to it'; **badîsh** is equivalent to **patash** in the Sassanian signatures, and **guvaham** to **gôkâs hûmanam**; **guvah** being Persian 'guvâh' 'testimony', 'a witness', and the suffix **am** is 'I am'. These readings show that the writers did not use the Hebrew language; for the language here is clearly Persian, but in a form which closely approaches to the so-called Chaldæo-Pahlavî which appears, from this document, to have been still in use in the 9th century, among certain classes of the inhabitants of Persia. For all those who signed the grant as witnesses, seem to have come from Persia and Arabia, and were probably emigrants."[3]

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[1] Dr. Haug's date is confirmed by the "Tohfut al Mujahideen" (p. 56) which puts (on tradition, however) the great settlement of Arabs at Cranganore at about 822 A. D. He is however mistaken in supposing that the inscription has not been deciphered; the explanation of it by Dr. Gundert (*Madras Journal*, vol. xiii.) is one of the most remarkable results of Dravidian studies. (A. B.)

[2] I would venture to suggest that these letters may be also read **Min nakûb** which, (cfr. the Persian-Arabic naqûb) would mean, 'by sign' or 'mark' which would be much as the same as Dr. Haug's translation of the Chaldaean part of the attestations which follow. (A. B.)

[3] 'Essay on Pahlavî' (in 'An old Pahlavî-Pazand Glossary' 1870.) pp. 80-2.

III.

Apart from the few inferences that I have ventured to draw, the many certain facts I have collected above prove that from the 3rd to the 11th century, there were missions by and important settlements of Persians, (both Zoroastrians and Christians of some kind), in Southern India, and the characters of the languages used show that they came from Babylonia. Now the greater part of this time, that country was the most important centre of intellectual activity in the civilized world. The Sassanian kingdom was great in every way, and it was succeeded by the scarcely less glorious Khaliphate. In the 3rd century Babylonia gave rise to Manichaeism, which in a few years threatened to extinguish all other forms of Christianity.[1] The Talmudical school of Sora and the labours of its chief Saadia (†942) and other Hebrew grammarians are justly famous. The greatest Arabic grammarian Sîbaweh, was by origin a Persian of the same country,[2] and there the Arabs studied Greek and Indian treatises on Philosophy and Medicine, which they spared no pains to procure. Last, but not least, the poor remaining fragments of the great Magian literature show that the followers of Zoroaster were as forward as any; nor did they confine themselves to their own literature[3].

Is it not therefore probable, that, Persia has influenced India as much as Alexandria? Indian Astronomy and Astrology are adaptations of the Alexandrian systems, and are full of corrupt Greek words which make it questionable if they came to the Indians direct; if transmitted, Persia must have been the medium. The Sanskrit Grammarians, both of Pâṇini's and Çâka*t*âyana's schools, knew of Yavana writing, which can only be the Persian,[4] and for the origin of writing in India we must look to Babylonia or to Himyaritic Arabia.[5] It is remarkable that all the greatest reformers in S. India were born near Persian settlements; Ça*n*karâčârya near Cranganore, Râmânujâčârya near Madras, and Madhvâčârya at Kalyâ*n*a.[6] The only original S. Indian poet is the Tamiḷ Tiruvaḷḷuvan, but he was a native of San Tomè, and of very low caste; in his sister, Auvaiyâr's poems Christian influences are evident to a casual reader. In Tiruvaḷḷuvan's poem the indications of such influences are less precise but still apparent. The resemblances between Christianity and the S. Indian modifications of the old Vedanta are numerous and complete, especially if the systems of Mânî and the Gnostics are considered. Mr. P. Le Page Renouf has shown that early Christianity cannot have borrowed from the East, and that Indian influences can only have come through Persia after the middle of the 6th century; the presumption therefore is that the Brahman reformers borrowed from the Christians. Chronologically

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1) Mr. Beale tells us that Mânî is worshipped in China (by Buddhists) as a manifestation of Avalokiteçvara. His followers were very numerous in Tartary up to the 10th century.

2) He died in 796 or 793 A. D.

3) Benfey "Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft" pp. 184-4.

4) It is singular that the Indo-Syrians are now called in Malabar Jônaȳar or Yônaȳar; the word has been long current in the country. +

5) It is not improbable that we shall find traces of intercourse in names of imported goods. In whatever country wheat may be indigenous, it is hardly India, but not improbably Persia. In Pahlavî it is called kantûm, which seems the most probable origin for the Sanskrit and Dravidian godhûma and godumba. Again the Pahlavî šakar (sugar) is obviously Dravidian.

6) Mr. Kittel who has devoted much attention to the Lingait system is satisfied that its founder (Basava) borrowed from the Christians.

+ Yavana = originally 'Ionian' i.e. Greek; it must then have = 'foreigner', & then was applied to the Persians as the chief foreigners known to the natives of India, just as Hûna & Turushka were later applied to the Portuguese & English etc.

there is no difficulty in this; but to prove that the Hindus borrowed, it must be first shown that what is so suspiciously like Christianity was not developed independently in India from the Buddhist, Jain or *old* Vedanta systems; to do this will require the work of several years. The number of books it will be necessary to examine is enormous, but there is the great consolation that exceedingly little in them is original, as every writer copies his predecessors. The question can only be solved by a comparison of the various systems, for historical accounts of their founders are utterly wanting. We have, indeed, longwinded romances of how Çankara, Râmânuja and Madhva conquered all their opponents of different sects in disputations, but though all of them must have met Christians, there is *not a word* about them anywhere; it looks as if they were purposely ignored. That the Hindus have always been an imitative people, and ready to borrow foreign ideas, is proved by an enormous amount of evidence; *e. g.* writing was certainly adopted by them from foreigners; their astronomy and medicine (partly, at all events) are of Greek origin; the Sikhs and similar sects are the result of intercourse with Muhammadans, and the Brahmasamâj derives its leading doctrines from Christianity.[1] Mr. Fergusson considers that the Hindu architecture is of Greek origin. The question of foreign influences on the Indian literatures and religions is, therefore, one that cannot any longer be neglected, if these studies are to be pursued scientifically, and for legitimate purposes. It is a question that must be treated with the greatest caution, and independently of all theories, but it cannot be neglected any longer. My object has been to show that such influences could have had effect in S. India by a course as yet unsuspected. It may be the only one that waited discovery, but it certainly shows the great difficulty of the question, and that much patient archaeological investigation is yet necessary in India.

[1] The Brahmans have even forged an *Allah* upanishad! Dr. Hall found a copy at Benares, and it also appears in Dr. Bühler's Catalogue of MSS. from Gujarat. (Pt. i. p. 44.)

ADDENDUM TO P. 6. NOTE 5.

As this last page was being printed, I received, by Professor Weber's kindness, his Essay on the Kṛishṇajanmâshṭamî. The passage referred to is taken from a writer of the 12th century: "in der Aufzählung der Dependentien des Constantinopolitanischen Kirchensprengels, welche wir dem *Nilos Doxopatrios* im zwölften Jahrhundert verdanken, heisst es z. B., dass vor Alters der Patriarch von Antiochien ganz Asien, inclusive Indien umfasst habe, 'wo er noch bis jetzt den Katholikos von Rômagyri einsetzt'." (p. 320.) In a note Professor Weber identifies Rômagyri with Râmagiri: unfortunately this seems a common name in India. The Syrian Metropolitan now resides at Koṭṭayam (in Travancore), but Aṇgamâli (in the Cochin State) appears to have been the chief place of residence from the 16th till the beginning of the present century.

Professor Weber's remarkable Essay has completely exhausted the mythological and ceremonial results in India of Christian influences; I can only offer the above as a contribution towards showing how these results can have been brought about.